

"Mount Custis"  
Route 662, south side of Parker Creek,  
east of Accomac  
Accomac Vicinity  
Accomack County  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-627

HABS  
VA  
1-AC.V,  
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## "MOUNT CUSTIS"

Address: Route 662, south side of Parker Creek, east of Accomac, Accomac Vicinity, Accomack County, Virginia.

Present Owner and Occupant: Mrs. Louis H. Douglass, Accomac, Virginia.

Present Use: Residence.

Brief Statement of Significance: Home of prominent Eastern Shore of Virginia personalities including Thomas M. Bayly, Thomas H. Bayly, and Henry Custis.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: 1664, John Tilney; 1669, John Custis; 1693, Mary Parker, William Selby; 1708, Henry Custis, Robinson Custis, Mary (Parramore Custis) Pettit; 1769, Henry Custis; 1792, John Cropper; 1794, Thomas M. and Margaret (Cropper) Bayly; 1834, Thomas H. Bayly. Upon his death in 1856 the property was inherited by his daughter, Evelyn May Bailey, wife of Louis McLane Tiffany, M.D. Subsequently purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Louis H. Douglass. Mrs. Douglass now owns and lives at "Mt. Custis."

2. Dates of erection: The small section, now the entrance hall, may have been built in the early 1700's, for it is definitely quite early, but no definite date can be ascertained because there have been many alterations over the years. The two sections on the west may have been built by Thomas M. Bayly about 1800, and the two-story section on the east was added by his son, Thomas H. Bayly, in 1840.

3. Important old views: None available to compiler. A request to Mrs. Douglass, owner, for old photographs might well bring results.

4. Sources of information: Personal inspection; court records; Ralph T. Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore, A History of North Hampton and Accomack Counties, 2 vols. (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1951).

B. Supplemental Material: The following copy was prepared about ten years ago for publicity purposes in connection with Garden Week in Virginia:

"The earliest record of 'Mt. Custis,' north of Accomac, indicates that John Custis II, the original member of the Custis family in Virginia, was assigned a patent for the property in 1669, and the central part of the present house was constructed by him in 1710. Additions were made by Thomas M. Bayly in the latter part of the eighteenth century, by Thomas H. Bayly in 1840 and the west end added as servants' quarters by Mrs. McLane Tiffany in early 1900. These additions have resulted in the house being constructed on four levels, and it is often referred to in error as the Siamese type of architecture which was common to this section in the early part of the eighteenth century.

"This lovely old home, situated on Parker's Creek in a grove of interesting trees, largely magnolias and lindens, is constructed of white clapboard with the original woodwork and floors in perfect condition. The first floor of the east end with its high ceilings, double parlors and marble mantels is extremely interesting from an architectural viewpoint and the Gothic arch plastic ceilings of the second floor of this wing are unusual to a point of rarity. It has been restored and modernized by its owners, Doctor and Mrs. Louis H. Douglass, who are in residence at 'Mt. Custis' and who are opening it for the first time for Historic Garden Week.

"An interesting historical note is that Lieutenant Colonel Henry Custis, a direct descendant of the original John Custis, is buried in the front yard. He was born at 'Mt. Custis' the 28th of July, 1743, and died there on the 27th of May, 1793. The family graveyard is some distance from the house near the shores of Parker's Creek which winds its way past 'Mt. Custis' to Metomkin Bay."

Prepared by Commander John A. Upshur  
Consultant, Colonial Williamsburg  
December 1961.